

Speldhurst News



November 2023

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Welcome

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our November edition of the magazine! This issue is packed with a variety of events around Speldhurst - there's something for everyone.

Our front cover features a wonderful photo, by local resident Rachel Bourdin, from last year's Speldhurst Bonfire night: this year's event promises to be just as spectacular!

Please note the various dates for the Chapel Project Open meetings, if you would like to have your say and find out more. News from Councillor Sankey is also featured this month.

We also include the details for the vital charity for Operation Christmas Child and an excellent article about its history by Julie Pinnell.

If you are getting ready for (dare I mention it?) Christmas, there is also a wonderful Christmas pudding recipe included on Page 14.

Finally, enjoy the crisp days and majestic scenery of November!
Very best wishes,

Maria

On behalf of Speldhurst News Editors:

Maria Turner, Sara Turner, Judith Malim

Please remember that copy for the **December 2023 edition** should be sent **before 10th November 2023** to: speldhurst.news@gmail.com. Word, Publisher or pdf files preferred. Thank you.

SPELDHURST NEWS endeavours to include articles in addition to village, church and chapel news. These are taken in good faith and without prejudice, therefore the committee will not be held responsible for the accuracy of the content, nor will it be held responsible for any work or treatment received from the advertisers. Readers should satisfy themselves of advertisers' abilities before accepting a job quotation or undertaking a course of treatment. All articles & inclusions should be sent as a word document attachment. The editors reserve the right to amend submissions where they feel it is appropriate.

Diary at a Glance

Mondays	Library	
Tuesdays	Bowls Club Practice	
	Walking Football	
Wednesdays	Praise & Play	p.4

November

Sat 4th	Penshurst Market	p,13
Sat 4th	Blackham Village Market	p.12
Sun 5th	Speldhurst Fireworks	p.5
Sat 11th	Speldhurst Winter Market	p.16
Sat 11th onwards	TW Creative Artists Pop Up	p.15
Mon 13th Thurs 16th Sat 18th	Chapel Project Open Meetings	p. 11
Sat 17th Nov	Blackham Wine Tasting Evening	p.9
Mon 13th/27th	Bumps & Babes	p.4

December

Sat 16th Dec	Speldhurst Community Choir Concert	p.10
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News & Announcements

What's on in Speldhurst for the Under 5's in November

Bumps and Babes, the coffee morning for Mums with under 2's, meets this month on Monday 13th & 27th November from 10.30am. We meet in each other's homes, so contact Jenny for more details if you are interested or know of anyone who might be.

For a chance to socialise with other Under 5's families in the village, Praise and Play, St Mary's Toddler Group, meets in church every Wednesday from 9 – 10.30am.

The children enjoy the toys, the ride-ons, the craft, the singing and the story and the opportunity to ring the church bell. Everyone is welcome – Mums, Dads, Grandparents, et al.

Towards the end of the month our group will have the opportunity to sign up first for The Posada (figures of Mary & Joseph who travel from house to house during December as everyone anticipates Christmas). More about that soon.

Contact Jenny on 07891318123 or at jenny50fitz@gmail.com for more information

Good News!

Hams No. 1 Bus Service has been saved!
Thanks to the intervention of parents, councillors and others!





Ton-

bridge Music Club's 61st Season gets going!

Autumn is here and that can only mean one certain thing, which is that Tonbridge Music Club's 2023/24 Season is well under way! **On 5 November, at 11.00am - a Sunday morning Coffee Concert at Somerhill**, where several young prize-winners from last year's inaugural 'TMC Awards Scheme' will delight us by displaying their extraordinary talent. The scheme has run again this year and TMC is very pleased to be able to financially support, if only in a modest way, the thriving musical talent that exists amongst our young people locally. This is sure to be a very special concert and we would welcome your support. Then, on **Saturday 9 December at 7.30pm**, the all-female a cappella group **Papagena**, with harpist **Victoria Davies**, will bring us '*A Winter's Dawn*', a programme specially designed for a winter's evening and will include carols, lullabies and songs of hope. Warming mulled wine and mince pies to be served in the interval! **To find out more about TMC's 2023/24 Season**, please go to our website, www.tmc.org.uk

Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child began in the UK in 1990, after Dave Cooke, a local businessman in Wrexham and his wife Jill felt called to do something in response to the plight of Romanian orphans at the end of the Cold War. Dave's sister Jan, came up with the concept of the shoebox gift as a form of easily transportable 'Christmas stocking' wrapped and packed with love - a tangible message of hope for children in the toughest of circumstances. That first year 3000 boxes were sent to Romania. The scheme was then incorporated into the work of Samaritan's Purse – a Christian Charity who have expanded it across the world, meaning that over the past 30 years, more than 200 million children have received a shoebox gift! The shoe boxes go to children in need in over 160 countries across the world, and every single box makes such a huge difference to the children receiving them.

I was lucky enough to be able to go and distribute a number of boxes in Malawi before Covid. It was a truly humbling and wonderful experience. To see first-hand the reactions of the children receiving them was just wonderful – they were so excited to get the simplest of items – a pack of colouring crayons, a hair band – even a toothbrush of their very own. It was very humbling to think that a small box of relatively inexpensive things could mean so much. Cuddly toys were especially well received – regardless of the age or sex of the recipient. But I was quite surprised to see that the most precious item for most of the children was if they were lucky enough to get a photograph of the person sending it. I saw a photo stuck by the bed of a child more than once whilst I was there, and when I asked, was told that the children felt really special that someone so far away had thought of them and wanted to send them such wonderful presents.

If you want to get involved this year, you can pack your own shoebox (see the advert elsewhere in the magazine), or even pack a box online (see www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/shoeboxonline). The local processing centre in Tonbridge are always looking for volunteers to process the thousands of boxes kindly donated and there are all sorts of jobs there, from collecting boxes from drop off points in the area, to checking donated boxes, to filling the huge lorries that are waiting to take the boxes to their final destinations. For more information please contact me -

juliepinnell@gmail.com, 01892 863300 or 07917 606542



Yes, it's SHOEBOX season again!

Could you pack a shoebox (or two) this year?

Leaflets are available from St Mary's or Speldhurst Shop and Post Office, where completed boxes can also be dropped off from the 13th – 20th November.

Also, we are again looking for volunteers to help process the thousands of boxes donated at our South East Processing Centre. It will be open from the 21st November to 16th December.

Everyone is welcome, whether for just 2 hours one day, or all day every day!

For more information please contact Julie Pinnell on jkp3306@gmail.com, or call [01892 863300](tel:01892863300) or [07917 606542](tel:07917606542)



Christmas Trees

GRADE 1
KENT GROWN

NOVEMBER 25TH - 26TH

DECEMBER 2ND - 3RD

9-4pm



3ft potted and 5ft-8ft NORDMANN FIR in stock.
3-18ft available for pre-order.

WE ALSO HAVE WREATHS AND CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS!
PLEASE PLACE PRE-ORDERS BY 6TH OF NOVEMBER.

DRAGONFLY FARM Langton Road, Speldhurst TN3 0NR
Other times available by appointment, 07899286144

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Michael Giles who won the Carers award at the BBC Radio Kent Make a Difference Awards at Priestfield Stadium, Gillingham. This was in recognition for the 40 years service he has given to Aspens in Pembury working with adults with learning disabilities. His work involves helping them participate in horticultural activities and animal care.

Well done.

From Margaret, Ashley & Charlotte Giles.

A festive poster for a Christmas Wine Tasting event. The background is white with a green border. The text is centered and surrounded by illustrations of holly leaves, red berries, pine needles, and two white birds in flight. A large red Christmas ornament hangs from the top right.

Blackham Village Hall

Christmas
Wine Tasting

FRIDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2023
7.30PM

LOCAL WINE EXPERT
ALL EASILY SOURCED WINES FOR YOU
TO ENJOY AT CHRISTMAS WITH FAMILY
AND FRIENDS.

*A FUN EVENING YOU WILL NOT WANT TO
MISS*

Tickets £20 per person
FOR TICKETS PLEASE CALL
PENNY ON 01892 740574

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

2023 COMMUNITY CHOIR CONCERT

DATE: 16TH DECEMBER

Rehearsals: Every Friday starting 10th
November at 7:30pm in St Mary's

If you have a passion for singing, join us! No
experience required and no auditions.

Contact: Heather Hughes hhughes8dw@icloud.com



THE CHAPEL PROJECT

Launch of Community Share Offer and Fundraising.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

To secure a long-term future for Speldhurst's Community Shop & Post Office and Speldhurst Chapel, bringing them together to create a Community Hub for Speldhurst.

OPEN MEETINGS - ALL WELCOME

Speldhurst Village Hall - Monday 13th November 7.30pm & Saturday 18th November 7.30pm
St. Mary's Speldhurst - Thursday 16th November 2.30pm

Share Offer and Fund Raise

- Opens Monday 13th November 2023.
- Closes Friday 8th December 2023.

The support of Speldhurst Parish Council and the very positive response to its consultation, with 82% of respondents supporting the plan for the Parish Council to buy the Chapel, is a huge step forward for the Chapel Project.

Now as a community we need do our part. We are aiming to raise £200,000 to fund, in part, the building works at the Chapel to enable the Shop and Post Office to relocate to the Chapel and also create a community space in the building.

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

The future of:

Your Community Shop and Post Office, whose lease expires in August 2024.

The Chapel building and site at the heart of the village, which will otherwise be sold and lost as a community asset.



COME TO ONE OF THE MEETINGS TO HEAR:

- What the Plan is.
- What works are proposed for the Chapel building.
- How we will raise the money.
- How you can volunteer.
- How you can have your say.
- What a Community Benefit Society is.

Contact us at: speldhurstcommunityshop@gmail.com



New at Bore Place! Farm Produce Available

Bore Place, near Chiddingstone, has just opened a brand-new Farm Gate with a state of the art vending machine stocking fresh organic veg, Blackwoods' cheese, honey and other dairy produce including yogurt and kefir as well as ice creams. The Farm Gate is run by young people on educational programmes at Bore Place and all profits are fed back into the programmes.

Also new at Bore Place is a visitor experience – the Milking Parlour - which enables visitors to see the Bore Place cows being milked through a viewing window and learn about organic farming, as well as new way-marked family trails around the estate with information boards along the way. Free entry and free parking.



*Don't miss the Farmers' Market this November
for all the best locally produced food & drink*



**Saturday,
4th
November
2023**

**9.30 am
to
12.00 pm**

**Penshurst
Place Visitor
Car Park**



The clocks have gone back, the days are ever shorter but the market at Penshurst promises to be as busy as ever this November.

We have a wide range of stalls offering the finest local, seasonal produce all grown, caught or cooked within 35 miles of the market.

Whether it's award-winning bread, fish and seafood, grass-fed beef and lamb, vegetables, cheeses, preserves, home-baked cakes or craft gin you're looking for, you'll find all of it and more here at the market. Plus this month and next you can order your locally-reared Kellybronze Christmas turkey from Kent Turkeys who will be back with us, to pick up from the car park here at Penshurst Place on Friday 22nd December.

Buy locally grown plants, pick up a coffee, snack or meal from the Penshurst Place cafe. Parking is plentiful, free and close by. Dogs and families welcome.

****DECEMBER DATES for your DIARY****

This year we will once again be running two markets in December, our regular market on Saturday 2nd, and a bumper festive one with all our regular stalls plus guest food and craft stalls on Saturday 16th staying open an extra hour from 9.30 till 1.00pm.

Find us on Facebook

Find us on Twitter and Instagram

WWW.kfma.org.uk/penshurst

Christmas Pudding - A recipe from the Royal Table – and ingredients from Speldhurst Village Shop

Stir up Sunday this year is November 26th. It's a centuries old tradition made popular in Victorian times when all the family gathered to stir the Christmas pudding which is then steamed and stored until needed to crown the festive table. The date falls on the last Sunday before Advent and gets its name not from the cooking term but from the Book of Common Prayer collect for the day. "Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen". For home-cooks who traditionally make their own puddings, Stir up Sunday is a chance to get everyone, including children and grandchildren, involved in the festive preparations. Since 2021, when the chefs in the Royal kitchens shared their recipe, making your own pudding is an opportunity to finish the Christmas Day meal with a Royal flourish before settling down in front of the telly for the King's speech.

INGREDIENTS: - This recipe will make two 1kg puddings.

250g raisins
250g currants
185g sultanas
150g mixed peel
250g suet or vegetarian suet
250g breadcrumbs
90g flour
12g mixed spice
2 whole eggs
180g demerara sugar
275ml beer
40ml dark rum
40ml brandy



(If you don't want to use alcohol, you can substitute with orange juice or cold tea

METHOD: - *First, combine all dry ingredients. Stir them up.* Add eggs and liquid. *Stir it all up.* Grease your pudding basins. Press pudding mix into the basins. Cover with a circle of parchment paper. Cover the basins with muslin or foil. Place puddings in a deep saucepan and fill with water up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of basin height. Cover saucepan with foil and steam for 6 hours topping up water as needed.. Once cooled, wrap puddings well and keep in a cool, dry, dark place until Christmas

On Christmas Day, reheat your pudding in a bain-marie for 3-4 hours (To microwave, remove lid and place upside down on a plate, then microwave for approx 1 minute per 200g.). Remove from the basin using a rounded knife or palette knife, flip out onto a plate, garnish or flambé and serve with brandy sauce and cream.

Julie Pinnell, Speldhurst Village Shop

Along with other local artists, I am so pleased to be part of an artist group called the TW Artist Collective. We have worked together for several years and are pleased to be 'popping up' in Tunbridge Wells to sell our work together. We hope you can visit! - Maria Turner

Discover the **Art** of **Christmas** at our **Pop-up Shop**

NOV 11 - DEC 23

ROYAL VICTORIA PLACE

TN1 2SS UPPER FLOOR - OPPOSITE HMV

[Instagram: @twells_creative_art](https://www.instagram.com/twells_creative_art) [Facebook: twellscreativeart](https://www.facebook.com/twellscreativeart)



**TWells
Creative
Art**

@karinkatdelhenderson



@beccegalbraithart



claresunmoneglass



lensbruce.photos



Andy Young



suzyphilipsgallery.co.uk



ameliejoy.co.uk



Maria Turner



juliepatience.com



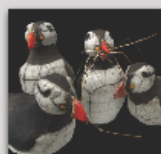
hiliaryshieldsglass.com



katehasted.co.uk



Wes (Raku)



philwey.co.uk



Hella Koevil





The Speldhurst Village Hall Winter Market




**FREE ADMISSION
RASCALS PIZZA, KIDS TRAIL, HOT
CIDER, CAKE, CRAFTS, GIFTS, XMAS
DECORATIONS, JEWELLERY, TOYS
AND SO MUCH MORE!**




**2 - 5pm
Saturday 11th November**

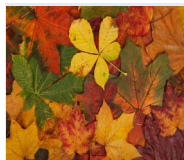


**YOU'LL ALSO FIND THE MINI MAKERS EMPORIUM
STOCKED WITH TREATS AND CRAFTS BY OUR
TALENTED UNDER 14'S**



Some stalls are cash only





NATURE WATCH



November is one of the quieter months of the year for wildlife so we are looking at some successes starting with the bittern. The RSPB and others have been re-pairing and making new reed beds to help the Bittern which also helps many other species that love wetlands and marshes. 228 Booming Bitterns were recorded at 103 sites in 2022, in 1997 there were only 11. Just heard that a pair of Hoopoe have raised 3 young in the UK this year. This colourful bird from Europe would be a lovely addition to our garden bird list and with climate change others may follow. The results of the Big Butterfly count have just been published and out of 17 species seen only four showed a decline from last year, two being Common Blue and Ringlet. The star performer being Red Admiral which was up an amazing 338% and is up 77% over a 13 year period which is good news. The Holly Blue, that small blue Butterfly we see in our gardens flying along the hedges also did well, up 66%. Over the 13 year period a gain of 41%. The Gatekeeper, the smallish brown Butterfly we see in our gardens July to August was up 12% this year which is good to see as its had a drop of 22% over the last 13 years.

Now is Fungi time and a new one I have found is a Ruby Bolete, {picture} a grassland fungi under Oak and Beech trees. It is edible but it tastes soapy so stick to what you can buy in the supermarket unless you are an expert.



Alan Ford

News from TWB Cllr Matthew Sankey

Hi there,

It's been a while since I wrote to you with an update. The council felt like it went into shut down over the summer with so many people going away.

PR2

Let's get this beast out the way first. PR2 is the technical term for the bus gate outside the town hall. Many years ago, this was redeveloped and it became bus only. This failed when people managed to appeal their tickets due to poor signage. The signage has now been fixed and TWBC have won all their appeals. Traffic is down to 100 cars a day and whilst that's a lot less than the 1000 going through it before it's still too many. It is clear as day to me that we need to do more, simply fixing the signs isn't enough. I have instigated the political ball to ensure that the funds raised by the fines is spend on improving this to not only make it more visually obvious but also more visually appealing to all. The next event is the Joint Transport Board in January.

Sadly, what we cannot do is reverse it and put it back, the road design is for buses and low traffic not high traffic and cars, this causes accidents and the main reason for the fine cameras being turned back on was several very bad RTAs.

To be clear this is a KCC project that TWBC are administrating, don't let anyone tell you anything else. Despite this its affecting everyone so I won't be letting go of it.

Planning

I must admit it took me a while to get my head round what my role was with planning in our ward. As you can imagine I get plenty of emails about applications from both sides of the argument.

I am not the jury here, as I do not sit on the planning committee. My role is to help everyone understand how the system works, what their rights are and how to ensure their voice is heard loud and clear.

This essentially means holding both objectors and applicants' hands when there are contentious issues. I have been able to do this now on many occasions and have remained neutral letting the council's democratic system do the work.

I urge anyone who has any concerns or questions about planning, the process, or specific applications to contact me directly as soon as they become aware of any issues.

KCC & their highways

Whilst Highways are not in my gift to maintain, fix or close I am very much aware of how irritating and painful the apparent lottery style system KCC seem to apply to carrying out works has become. It is causing us all huge irritation and I'm certain its costing the Gnd thousands.

I now get instant updates into my inbox when there are planned or emergency works in our area. I use these to advise you via the facebook page to help plan your day. I have also been able to use these and ask KCC to apply some common sense to proceedings. Such as when they tried to shut off Lower Green Road whilst also closing off Langton road and Barden road. What on earth are they thinking... Well they won't think, so I am doing it for them. More annoyingly their KCC Cllrs just don't acknowledge it's an issue... their elections are in May 2025, pop that in the diary.

Cycle Path to TW from Langton

I recently met with the actual people designing the scheme, they have started their work and once complete it will be put to KCC to seek full funding for the project.

Your Borough Councillors

	Contact Details	Re-Election Date
Cllr Matthew Sankey (Alliance)	07881 674 310 matthew.sankey@tunbridgewells.gov.uk	May 2024
Cllr Paul Curry (Alliance)	07515 938 765 Paul.curry@tunbridgewells.gov.uk	May 2024
Cllr Harry Allen (Conservative)	07523 005 178 harry.allen@tunbridgewells.gov.uk	May 2024



Speldhurst CEP School News



A host of well-known faces sent good luck videos to our pupils at Speldhurst School for the PTA's big fund-raising event last month – the first ever Kitchen Disco. The sprinkling of celebrity stardust included Davina McCall, Ellie Goulding, Rita Ora, Jonathan Ross and Bradley Walsh who urged the children to 'keep on dancing' and 'smash' the fund-raising target which they did, raising £6,000 towards the new kitchen - much more than expected. Jonathan Ross even joined in with his own video dance which included a twerk or two.

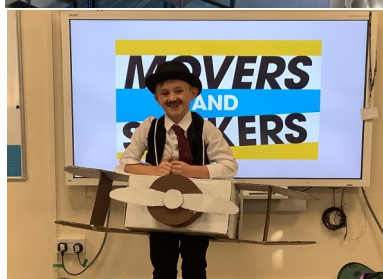
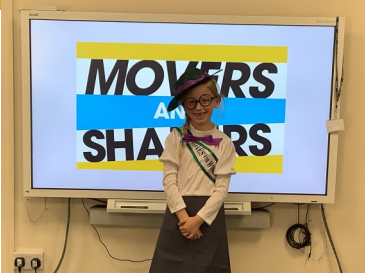
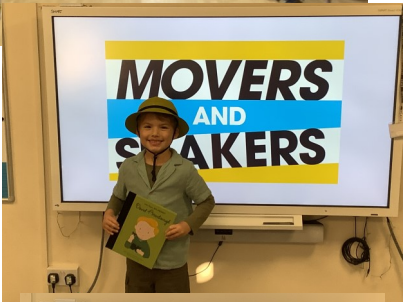
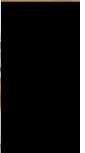
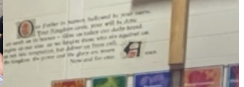
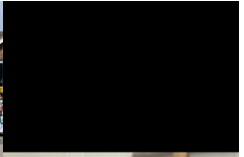
The six hour dance-athon was definitely a school day to remember, starting with a whole school assembly in the morning and, ending with a performance in the playground for families. All the children had special T shirts and the event attracted the attention of local TV news.

The dance-athon, was just one of a whole range of recent events including the Big Quiz Night (a photo of the winning team 'The Wild Ones below) and the annual Firework and Bonfire Night on November 5th. You may have seen all the posters about the event round the village featuring some of the pupils exciting artwork. Once again, many thanks to the McAuleys for letting us use their field opposite the school for the event. I remember when I was on the PTA years ago having to round up, with the Headteacher at the time, the local farmer's Jacob sheep into a trailer, before we could set up for the event!! Well done to the PTA both for their faultless organisation and the £25,000 they have raised towards the school's new kitchen fitted with the latest equipment (see photo below) ready for our new chef who by the time you read this will be well-established, making freshly cooked meals for pupils and staff.

Meanwhile in class this term, pupils have been learning about 'movers and shakers' throughout history. Those who have changed the world and the way we think - from explorers and inventors to suffragettes and pioneering women like the Victorian palaeontologist Mary Anning, who led the way in hunting and categorising fossils.

Opposite are some photos of Year 2 pupils in Galaxy Gala class dressed up as the Movers and Shakers who have inspired them most. Guess who they are? So a big thank you to all the 'movers and shakers' who have made our lives better – whether through history on a global scale or in our small corner of Kent through the enthusiasm, commitment and hard-work of the PTA and School staff and the children who lived up to the celebrity endorsement as 'amazing'.. Congratulations everyone.

Sara Andrew Communications Governor.





NEWS FROM SPELDHURST PARISH COUNCIL



Footpaths Update

Councillor Ian Muress has taken on the role of public footpath coordinator for the parish council. We have more than 50 public rights of way in Speldhurst Parish, so it's quite a task! Ian has been working with our office team to assign footpaths to some of our parish councillors to keep an eye on. They will join our volunteer footpath 'adopters' and all the helpful residents who regularly walk the footpaths and let us know when repairs are needed.

Talking of repairs, if you've recently reported an issue on a footpath through our website and haven't heard back from us, please be assured that we aren't ignoring you. We currently have a backlog of reports to address, including surface problems, vegetation clearing, and bridge repairs, which we will report to Kent County Council (KCC). We'll also do our best to make contact with the landowners responsible for fixing stiles, gates, and trees. We hope to clear this backlog by the end of the month, so please continue to report any faults at www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

Lastly, if you're a landowner with a public footpath crossing your land, we'd love you to get in touch. We want to make your life easier by informing you of broken stiles and gates or fallen trees you might not be aware of. And we want to inform you about grants or money-saving initiatives from KCC, or organisations like the High Weald Partnership, that will help with maintenance. Councillor Muress is also interested in walking your footpaths with you to better understand the challenges you face in maintaining them. So please do call the office, or email Catherine Barrett: admin@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk
And finally.... please do your bit when you're out walking by keeping your dog with you (there've been recent reports of dogs attacking sheep and other dogs), closing gates behind you, and taking litter home when you go.

Weed control trial at Langton Green Recreation Ground

Having ceased use of glyphosate-based products last year, we spent the 2023 growing season testing new methods of weed control at Langton Green Recreation Ground. It's likely that the UK government will review the use of glyphosate-based weed killer in late 2025, and we, with other local councils, want plenty of time to explore alternatives to this widely used pesticide.

At Langton Green Rec, we tried various products and methods in different areas, from the car park to the pathways, the paved area near the pavilion, and the play-ground.

This trial did not directly compare the old glyphosate-based product and the new alternatives, because some areas were intentionally left to grow as part of a kinder approach to weeds. This included the grass verge that borders the footpath leading to Langton Green Primary School. Previously, the nettles growing on this verge were destroyed with Glyphosate; this year, we just strimmed a border and left the rest to attract wildlife. Instead, we focused on areas where weeds could cause safety issues.

We found that a product called Natural Roundup worked well, and have decided to continue testing it next year, applying it more effectively based on what we learned in 2023.

If you want to stop using Glyphosate in your own garden and would like to learn more about the methods we tried, please call in for a chat.

*Coming Soon.....*A vacancy for a new councillor; see our website to apply.

Public Meetings – All Welcome

Full Council, 7.30pm, 6th Nov, Committee Room, Speldhurst Village Hall.

To Contact the Parish Council: Call the Clerk, Katie Neve on 01892 862927/07760 769513 or email clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk
For helpful information, visit www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk



~ Allotment & Gardening News ~



The Arrival of Winter

Autumn ends when plants begin their period of winter dormancy. Most plants cease to grow when the daily mean temperature falls below 6C (43F). This usually occurs during the latter half of November – though frosts may have curtailed growth or killed off non-hardy plants before this time. Yet in spite of cold, raw days and fog, this is a good month for planting many things in our gardens – bulbs, shrubs, herbaceous plants, vegetables – as well as harvesting vegetables, pruning and for clearing up before the full winter. Good gardening days are infrequent this month, which is all the more reason for taking advantage of the few suitable days. November is a perfect time to sow broad beans and peas for next Spring as well as planting out onion, shallot and garlic sets.

We can protect our garden and provide for wildlife with these steps:

- Rake up fallen leaves and mound them up to create leaf mould for use in the springtime.

- Remove all remaining plant debris from the vegetable plot.

- Stock up with items for bird feeders and begin putting out more food for the birds.

- Provide a food source, as food is hard to come by for many animals at this time of year.

- Be sure roses are well-pruned to prevent wind damage.

- Plant tulip bulbs for early spring blooming.

- Keep some areas messy, as wildlife usually prefers a messy garden.

- Provide a food source, as food is hard to come by for many animals at this time of year.

- Make a bug hotel.

- Provide fresh water.

- Put up a nesting box.

- Leave the compost heap to nature.

- Add a few late-flowering plants.

These are just some of the tasks to be performed from November. However, when it comes to cold winter months, we may have a reduced inclination to go outside in cold and damp conditions. But as can be seen from the list above, there is still plenty that can be done in the garden and especially on the allotments.

In his book ‘There is no Planet B’, Mike Peters Lee makes very little reference to the potential impact of gardens on reducing carbon emissions and providing for nature. Which is a pity because approximately 87% of British homes have gardens, equalling around 23 million outdoor spaces. Around 27 million people enjoy gardening in the UK, with 57% of gardeners being female. From pulling up weeds and tending to the plants, to sitting back with a cup of coffee, gardens are used for work, relaxation, growing food, socialising, playing with kids and enjoying nature. Research has identified that frequent garden visits were shown to boost wellbeing, with a strong link between the amount of nature in the garden and people’s happiness. However, with the average working week totalling 36.5 hours, it’s not surprising that the over 55’s are the age group most likely to garden. Yet the average gardener spends 2 hours a week tending to the plants, weeding, mowing the lawn, cutting hedges and generally maintaining their outdoor space. A 2021 Statista garden trends survey listed the most popular garden trends as follows:

- Having a vegetable patch 28%
- Have garden gnomes (!) 15%
- Have Instagram-friendly fire pits 12%
- Have outdoor sofas 11%
- Have summer houses 11%
- Have a hot tub 5%
- Have exercise equipment 5%
- Have outdoor rugs 5%

Not only does tending to the plants help to boost overall well-being, gardening is an active pastime, burning around 300 calories per hour (the same as running or swimming for 30 minutes). In previous newsletters, we have touched quite a lot on the health, wellbeing and eco-friendly aspects of gardening and having an allotment. However, whilst it’s terribly British to complain about the weather – especially during November – there is so much to be gained from everything we do in our outdoor spaces. If you are interested in these topics / types of discussions, there is a Facebook page where we go into a lot of this type of stuff. It is called Speldhurst Allotmenters & Gardeners and the web address is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/305824050847755>. Hope to see you there.

If you are interested in acquiring an allotment and doing your bit grow your own food and save our planet, please contact **Mark Oddy on 01892 862746**. If there is any topic you would like to address relating to matters gardening or horticultural, please send an email to kytehouse@stepex.co.uk. If you would like to submit something for this article, please also email it to kytehouse@stepex.co.uk

It is Okay to Weep

One time I used to think it weak when I cried
When words got stuck and I could not explain!
I used to think it shameful to lose control
And collapse in a heap, and almost die of pain.

But now that's all changed because God answers my tears –
Like Him being at the other end of a telephone line
He hears the cry of my heart!

Now, they are His Saving Grace for me.
They are a sign of His love:
His compassionate heart comes down to meet me
From Heaven to Earth!

And now I feel privileged to be able to say that
I see tears as His love come down
As precious drops of Jesus's blood for me!

He listens for the tears in order to bless us
And he longs to anoint us with the Holy Spirit,
Speaking heart to heart with God himself through them.

Who has the wisdom to count the drops of rain,
Or the tears that flow from heartfelt pain?
As rain comes from the Heavens to water the earth,
Do tears come from the eyes to water the heart?

It is God who tips over the water jars from the Heavens;
It is He who put the tears into the soul;
It is He who designed tears to flow from the eyes;
It is He who waters the Spirit to grow into our lives.

So what are tears but a language all of their own
Between God the Creator to mankind on Earth.
They are the unspoken and unspeakable words of Wisdom,
Our hearts speaking to His heart,
And once shared with Him, He is WITH US!

By Joan Morris

Written 4th December 1994

An author's annotation on the poem reads: "All for God's Glory and Praise"

Joan Morris

In early October we celebrated Joan's life at her funeral and it was as though she was there. The most moving part was when her daughter Claire read this poem written by Joan about 30 years ago and we hope that it might help others.



A Letter from St Mary's

Dear Friends,

In my job, I get to talk with all sorts of different people about Jesus and the place he has at the centre of my life. In the Bible he is often described as the rock – the foundation stone on which we can build a solid and contented life.

I recall a couple of meetings earlier this month when the conversation got round to talking about what it means to be truly happy; we even got to wondering whether the pursuit of happiness is a pointless exercise and whether there is something better to aim for. We then got around to talking about being content in all circumstances and whether one needs a relationship with Jesus to be truly content or is it for everyone regardless of belief? Then joy... same questions... and are contentment and joy the same as happiness or better and deeper? In Paul's short letter to the Philippians (in the bible) he talks about being content in all circumstances and his ability to rejoice at all times now that he knows Jesus.

There are some things all of us need and probably the most important is love. Jesus loves each one of us unconditionally, whatever we believe and whatever we have done. Because he loves us he wants us all to know deep contentment and joy in our lives. It's usually a bit of a faith journey to find it, but so worthwhile. He also wants us to know a deep peace. Love, joy, peace, contentment are all easier to find if we can talk to Jesus about all that concerns us; if we pray. Love, joy and peace are found as we journey through life with Jesus deepening our faith in him

One step on that Christian faith journey is Baptism. In all three churches of this parish we are always happy to be asked to baptise children of any age and to prepare young people and adults for baptism. For children, parents and Godparents speak for them and commit to bringing them up in the Christian faith. For teens and adults they make their own commitments.

May God bless you
Sheila Perkins (Revd)

November 2023



5th November

10 am Communion

12th November

10 am Remembrance Service

19th November

8 am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10 am Communion

26th November

10 am All-Age Toy Service

6 pm Evensong

**The Church Office can be contacted on 861187 or
speldhurst.church@btopenworld.com**

Normal office hours: 9 am to 12.30 pm

See our website: www.speldhurstchurch.org

St Mary's Facebook page:

facebook.com/StMarysSpeldhurst/



Baptisms

8th October

Emilia Jools Evelyn Howell

Theodore Charlie Alexander Howell

Funeral and Burial in Churchyard

2nd October

Joan Morris



Speldhurst Village Website

Our website includes a calendar of village events, a photo gallery, some village history, a selection of local walks and cycle routes, past editions of Speldhurst News and more.

Why not take a look at: speldhurst.org?

SPELDHURST VILLAGE CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS

Age UK Lunch	Jan Mann	863931
Allotments	Mark Oddy	862746
Beavers	Jo Smith	518706
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Bridge Club	Heather Hughes	863367
Brownies	Louise Scott	862972
Bumps and Babes	Jenny Fitzsimmons	541200
Cricket Club	Nick Coffin	07867 803121
Junior Cricket section	Francis Booth	07738474144
Cubs	Karol Leeves	531104
Flower Show	Alan Ford	863276
Football: Speldhurst Rangers	Ollie Creees	07919467576
GP Surgery		863040
Guides	Sybil Oddy	862746
Library	Olive West	863234
Men on Wednesday	John Perkins	863239
Mothers' Union	Christine Baker	540793
Mothers & Toddlers	Jenny Fitzsimmons	541200
Nursery School		860557
Parish Council: Chair	Paul Curry	07515 938765
Vice Chair	Katrina Lyle	862070
Parish Clerk	Katie Neve	862927
Parish Councillors	Richard Ellery	864077
	Alan Rowe	863404
Police Community Support Officer	Gemma.Gilbert@kent.police.uk	
Primary School	Stephanie Hayward	863044
Rainbows	Alex Brown	
	speldhurstainbows@gmail.com	
Recreation Ground	Ed Wesson	07799 731247
Running Group	Paul Eames	07975 577630
Speldhurst Association of Men	Brian Tasker	862301
Snooker Club	Nick Fenton	864144
Speldhurst Art Exhibition	Maria Turner	863394
Speldhurst News Editors	Maria Turner	863394
	Sara Turner	863226
	Judith Malim	864268
Speldhurst News Advertising	Eric Roughley	863222

St Mary's Church Rector Administrator	Andrea Burgess	861187
Stoolball	Donna Burden	524793 07810 048599
Scouts	Nick Burgess	863362
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Village Fete: Chair	Mike Harrowing	0772 5561154
Village Hall	Sam Van Niekerk	07894 903979
Village Website	Miranda Hawkins	863601
Walking Football	Brian Shilling	07940 013135

Opening Hours & Local Information

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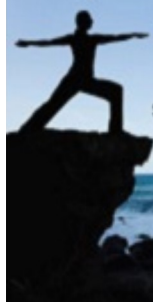
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